Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /063 W
----------312255Z 107942 /44
R 311341Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2301

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 4586

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA
FROM MADRAS MARCH 30, 1977 REPEATED FOR YOU

QUOTE
MADRAS 0539

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: THE SOUTH - SOME OBSERVWTIONS

1. DURING THE WEEK SINCE THE ELECTIONS RESULTS BECAME KNOWN, SOME THEORIES WHY THE SOUTH VOTED THE WAY IT VOTED HAVE EMERGEE AND TAKEN FORM AND WHAT WE SAY BELOW SEEMS TO BE THE GENERALLY ACCEPTEE EXPLANATION FOR THE OVERWHELMING VOTE FOR THE CONGRESS IN THIS AREA.

2. IN RETROSPECT, WE THINK IT IS TRUE THAT THE SOUTH WAS RELATIVELY UNTOUCHED BY THE EXCESSEE OF THE EMBERGENCY.KUMI SOME WAYS, NEW DELHI AND NORTH INDIA ARE LIGHT YEARS AWAY FROM THE SOUTH, AND FORCED STERILIZATION, SLUM CLEARANCE, ETC., HAD LITTLE IMPACT HERE. THE ONE STATE WHERE A REACTION AGAINST THE EMERGENCY SEEMED ALMOST CERTAIN - TAMIL NADU - WAS IN FACT OVERWHELMED BY AN AGING MOVIE ACTOR/ROBIN HOOD WHO LITERALLY PULLED THE CONGRESS PARTY WITH HIM AS HE STORMED TO A PHENOMENAL VICTORY. (WE WILL
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COMMENT ON THIS FURTHER IN THE TAMIL NADU SECTION BELOW.) IN BROAD TERMS, SANJAY GANDHI NEVER BECAME A FACTOR IN THE SOUTH, AND ON BALANCE, ANY EFFECT HE MIGHT HAVE HAD IN ANDHRA PRADESH AND KARNATAKA WAS PROBABLY FAVORABLE RATHER THAN UNFAVORABLE. IT IS WORTH MENTIONING THAT MANY, MANY PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH MAY HAVE VOTED FOR THE CONGRESS BECAUSE THEY EXPECTED

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THE CONGRESS TO WIN. WE THOUGHT AT THE TIME THAT
MRS. GANDHI'S TOUR OF THE AREA HAD REVERSED THE TREND
AGAINST HER, AND WE DO NOT RULE OUT THAT LARGE
NUMBERS OF VOTERS IN THE SOUTH FELT THE SAME WAY AND
WANTED TO VOTE FOR THE WINNER. THAT TOGETHER WITH LARGE
INFUSIONS OF LAST-MINUTE MONEY, MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN
A FACTOR.

3. ANDHRA PRADEEH CONTINUES A BASTION OF
THE CONGRESS PARTY, AS THE JANATA WAVE NEVER GOT
UNDER WAY IN THE STATE. LOOKING BACK. IT APPEARS
THAT THE JANATA IDENTIFIED ITSELF TOO CLOSELY WITH
THE LANDLORDS IN ANDHRA PRADESH, ALIENATING
PEASANTS AND AGRICUTURAL LABOR ALONG THE WAY.
ADDITIONALLY, JAGJIVAN RAM'S RESIGNATION HAD LITTLE
OR NO IMPACT AMONG THE HARIJANS, DESPITE OUR BELIEF
THAT HE WOULD INFLUENCE THE MEMBERS OF HIS OWN
COMMUNITY RESIDENT IN ANDHRA PRADESH. AS A FINAL
NOTE ON ANDHRA PRADESH,CHIEF MINISTER J. VENGALARAO
MUST BE GIVEN CONSIDERABLE CREDIT FOR HOLDING THE STATE
FOR HIS PARTY. VENGALA RAO INFORMED US A YEAR AGO
THAT HE CFQWD CARRY THE STATE FOR THE CONGRESS AND HE
DID. THE JANATA IS EXPECTED TO DEVOTE CONSIDERABLE
ATTENTION TO ORGANIZING THE STATE FOR ITSELF, BUT
WHETHER IT WILL BE ABLE TO BREAK THE MOLD REMAINS TO
BE SEEN.

4. KARNATAKA REMAINS MORE PUZZLING THAN ANDHRA PRADESH,
SINCE IT HAD BEEN FAIRLY WIDELY BELIEVED THAT THE ARRESTS
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UNDER MISA AND DIR COULD HAVE A SEVERE IMPACT IN THE STATE
AND MIGHT EVEN SWING IT TO THE JANATA.

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----------312255Z 107978 /44
R 311341Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2317

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 4586

THE JANATA PARTY SLATE OF CANDIDATES WAS CONSIDERED A STRONG ONE, AND EVEN MORE CONSERVATIVE OBSERVERS ESTIMATED THAT THE CONGRESS COULD LOSE AS MANY AS EIGHT TO TEN SEATS. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT THE HARIJDANS, OTHER BACKWARD SECTIONS OF THE SOCIETY, THE MINORITY GROUPS, AND RURAL LABOR CONTINUED TO SUPPORT THE CONGRESS AND CONTRIBUTED IN LARGE MEASURE TO ITS THUMPING WIN. STILL, IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THE CONGRESS TOOK ONLY FIFTY-SEVEN PER CENT OF THE VOTE IN 1977 COMPARED WITH SEVENTY-ONE PER CENT IN 1971. WE HAVE RECENTLY HEARD THAT FACTIONALISM IN THE STATE IS SOMEWHAT LESS THAN IT WAS BEFORE THE ELECTIONS THOUGH CHIEF MINISTER DEVARAJ URS WAS WELL KNOWN AS MRS. GANDHI'S MAN AND MAY BE HAVING SOME SLEEPLESS NIGHTS.

5. KERALA APPARENTLY FELT THE EMERGENCY NO MORE THWN ANDHRA PRADESH AND KARNATAKA, AS THE RULING FRONT TOOK ALL TWENTY LOK SABHA SEATS AND 111 OF THE 140 STATE ASSEMBLY SEATS. CONGRESS LEADERS K. KARUNAKARAN (NOW CHIEF MINISTER) AND CONGRESS PRESIDENT A. K. ANTONY APPARENTLY DID A GOOD JOB HOLDING THE STATE, AS THE CPM TURNED OUT CONSIDERABLY WEAKER THAN EXPECTED. A WELL-INFORMED SOURCE FROMKERALA RECENTLY INFORMED US, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT STATE POLICE INTELLIGENCE REPORTS WERE PREDICTING AS LATE AS THE DAY BEFORE THE ELECTION THAT THE CPM FRONT WOULD TAKE 85 ASSEMBLY SEATS. THE SPLIT IN THE KERALA CONGRESS AND IN CONFIDENTIAL

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THE KERALA MUSLIM LEAGUE APPARENTLY DID LITTLE DAMAGE. KARUNAKARAN, NOT VERY POPULAR WITH SOME SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION, APPEARS TO HAVE IMPROVED HIS OWN POSITION GREATLY, AS HE ENCOUNTERED NO OPPOSITION AT ALL IN MOVING INTO THE CHIEF MINISTER'S JOB.

6. TAMIL NADU IS, IN SOME WAYS, THE MOST INTERESTING PHENOMENON IN THE SOUTH, AS M. G. RAMACHANDRAN (MGR), A SIXTY-TWO YEAR OLD FILM ACTOR WITH LITTLE PRIOR PUBLIC EXPOSURE OUTSIDE MOVIE THEATERS, SWEPT THE STATE, CARRYIMG THE CONGRESS PARTY WITH HIM AND CRUSHING THE DMK, THE CONGRESS (O) AND THE CPM WHILE DOING SO. NO ONE EXPECTED MGR TOG
DO AS WELL AS HE DID, AND THE MOST OPTIMISTIC CONGRESS(R)/AIADMK ESTIMATES GAVE THE FRONT ONLY 25 OF THE 40 SEATS IN TAMIL NADU AND PONDICHERRY. THE RESULTS HAVE

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CATAPUNLTED MGR INTO A DOMINANT POSITION AS THE STATE EXPECTS
STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, AND HE
LOOKS MORE AND MORE LIKE THE NEXT CHIEF MINISTER OF TAMIL
NADU AS HE HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO MOVE IN THE DIRECTION OF
COOPERATION WITH THE JANATA PARTY (MADRAS 526). THE
CASUALTIES OF THE TAMIL NADU ELECTION WERE (A) THE DMK AND
ITS LEADER M. KARUNANIDHI, AND (B) THE COMGRESS (O) WHICH
SUFFERED AS A RESULT OF ITS ASSOCIATION WITH THE DMK. THE
CENTER'S CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT KARUNANIDHI WAS MORE
SUCCESSFUL THAN ANYONE HERE HAD BELIEVED, AND THE DMK MIGHT BE
FINISHED AS AN EFFECTIVE FORCE IN THE STATE FOR SOME TIME.

7. ANOTHER CASUALTY OF THE ELECTIONS IN THE SOUTH IS, AS
WE HAVE REPORTED, TAMIL NADU GOVERNOR MOHANLAL SUKHADIA
WHO REPORTEDLY WILL HEAD FOR RAJASTHAN WHEN HIS RESIGNATION
IS FORMALLY ACCEPTED. THE NEXT TO GO MAY BE UMA SHANKAR
DIKSHIT, WHO HAS SUDDENLY BECOME VERY UNPOPULAR IN KARNATAKA
AS THAT STATE SEEKS ACCOMMODATION WITH DELHI AND THE JANATA
PARTY. WANCHOO A RETIRED ICS MAN, IS PROBABLY SAFE IN KERALA,
AND ANDHRA PRADESH HAS NO GOVERNOR AT THIS TIME. THERE IS
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SOME NERVOUSNESS IN THE AREA CONCERNING HOW DELHI WILL
REACT TO A CONGRESS SOUTH, AND ALL FOUR STATES WILL
PROBABLY ACTIVELY SEEK ACCOMMODATION WITH THE NEW SITUATION
IN NEW DELHI. WE WILL FOLLOW THIS NEW STATE/CENTER RELATION-
SHIP AND REPORT FURTHER AS IT TAKES SHAPE IN THE SOUTH.
SIGNED MCCASKILL
UNQUOTE
SCHNEIDER

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